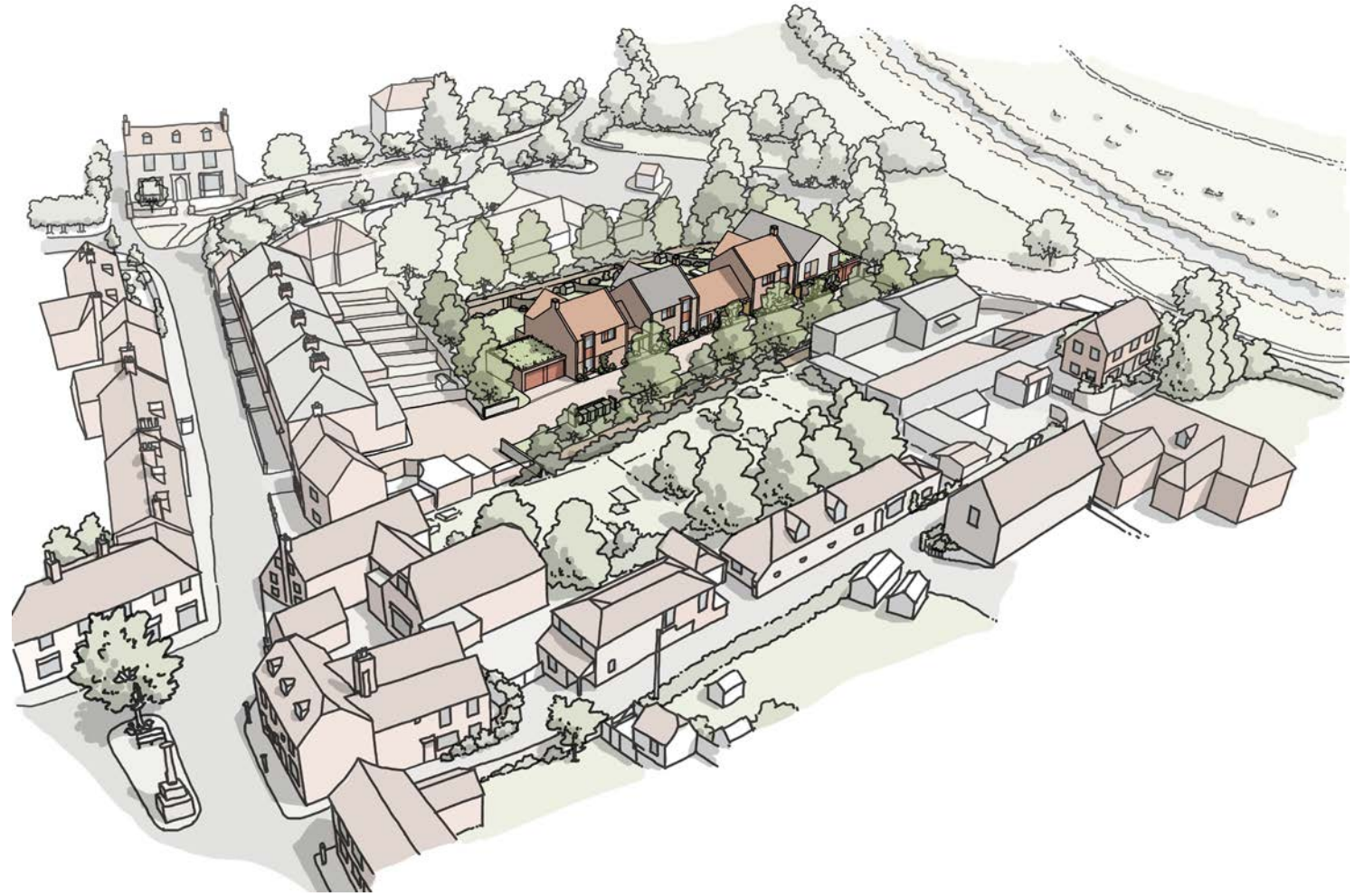


DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Former Allotments, North Street, Alfriston, Polegate,
South Downs
Local Plan Allocation SD58, BN26 5SX



RIBA Work stages: 3
Published: April 2024

CONTENT

1. Appraisal – site | Context
 - 1.1. Introduction
 - 1.2. Characteristics of surrounding area
 - 1.3. Overview of existing site & dwelling
 - 1.4. Reason for Application
2. Design Objectives | Planning Policy Issues | Access Statement
 - 2.1. Design Strategy
 - 2.2. Constraints and opportunities
 - 2.3. Design objectives | Summary
 - 2.3.1. Location | Orientation | Shading
 - 2.3.2. Access – Ensuring ease of access for all
 - 2.3.3. Form | Materiality
 - 2.3.4. Private | Semi-private | Public spaces
 - 2.3.5. Boundary treatment
 - 2.3.6. Hard and soft landscaping treatment
 - 2.3.7. Car parking
 - 2.3.7. Cycling | Refuse | Storage options
 - 2.4. Sitting | Environmental impact | Sustainability Statement
 - 2.5. Access Statement
 - 2.6. Planning policy
3. Summary

One of 'England's 27 most beautiful villages'

'If you're in the South Downs National Park or exploring the Cuckmere Valley, be sure to call in at Alfriston ...'
(Telegraph Travel's Teresa Machan)

1.0 APPRAISAL – SITE & CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been prepared in support of a Planning Application for the erection of 5 housing units, two garage blocks and associated external works. The application site is included in the site allocation of 5-10 dwellings under Policy SD58, however, because of its nature and location within a conservation area, a more sensitive approach has been taken to recommend a lower number, though higher quality, new residential units to consider for approval.

The proposed is a mix of 4 no. 3-bedroom and 1 no. 1-bedroom single- and two-storey properties located at the Former Allotments site, North Street, in Alfriston, Polegate BN26 5SX, in South Downs. The design principle of new houses allocated on the Former Allotment site is driven by a landscape-led approach and a greater analysis of the site conditions to inform the layout and design of the proposed development. It illustrates a careful consideration with regard to vehicular and pedestrian access to and through the site, minimising on-site parking where possible, thorough and detailed soft and hard landscape design, flooding and ground infiltration study - such that the character of the Alfriston Conservation Area is not harmfully impacted. The new development draws on a more linear, fragmented 'backland' approach in an overall site layout. All units face a shared lane running east-west that provides a second public right of way from the market area down to the river path. Given the local precedents, the planning application is for a high-quality design to provide residential use accommodation that promotes conservation through traditional construction techniques. As a former agricultural site and allotment, the typology of the buildings derives from modest in character forms, sympathetic with the existing farm buildings context and character of mews along River Lane which is part of the South Downs Way National Trail. Following the River Lane principle, the proposed buildings are set out on a consistent building line, with dynamic and active frontages, changing roof heights and recessed entrances. The design principles were to create a sustainable contemporary forms for living and takes the opportunity to consider future demands for sustainable delivery and energy-efficient habitable space whilst avoiding detrimental visual impact on the wider context of Alfriston - a highly sensitive medieval village situated within a downland valley in the South Downs National Park.

This Design and Access Statement presents a response to our client's brief, pre-application advice (received 19th Dec 2023), Allocation Policy SD58 (adopted 2nd July 2019 (2014-33), Conservation Officer Advice (received 23rd Nov 2023), SDNPA Design Officer (received 24th Nov 2023), and a thorough understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the site and the wider context.

The proposed development represents a sensitive and well-considered response following a thorough analysis of views, access, landscape, materiality, functionality and energy efficiency along with local and regional planning guidance. It exemplifies all aspects of sustainability - the social, economic and environmental sustainability that constitutes sustainable development, economic growth, and social progress and minimises negative environmental impact to protect the natural environment.

Site visits have been conducted to fully understand the specifics of scale, topography, context, and local environment. We have undertaken studies and collaborated with various consultants which has directly informed the design process, and their content has been integrated into the proposal.

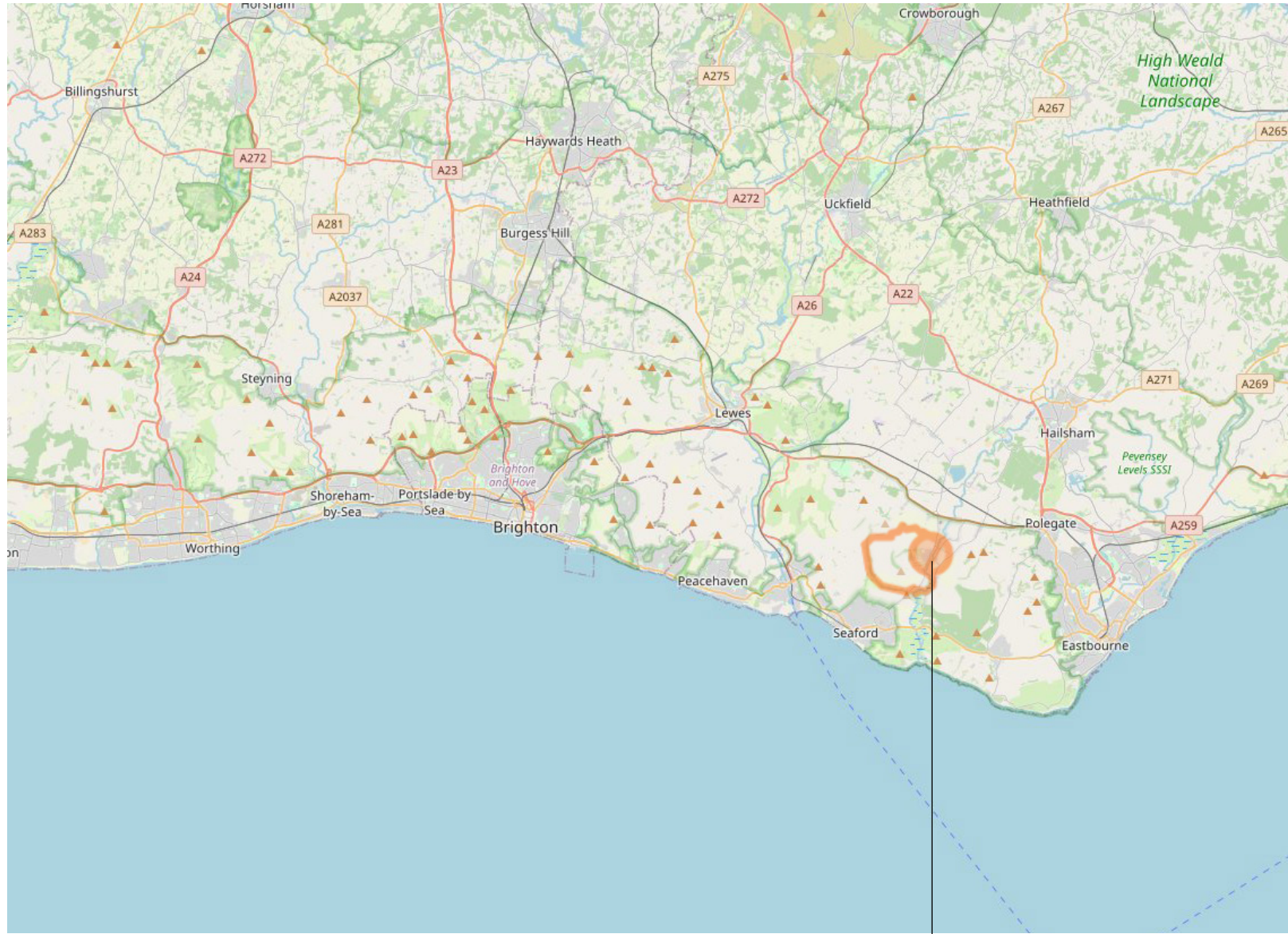
Consultants involved:

Planning Consultants
Heritage and Historic Building Consultant
Transport Planning and Infrastructure Design Consultants Engineers
Civil Engineering Consultant
Ecology and Arboricultural Consultants
Landscape Designer



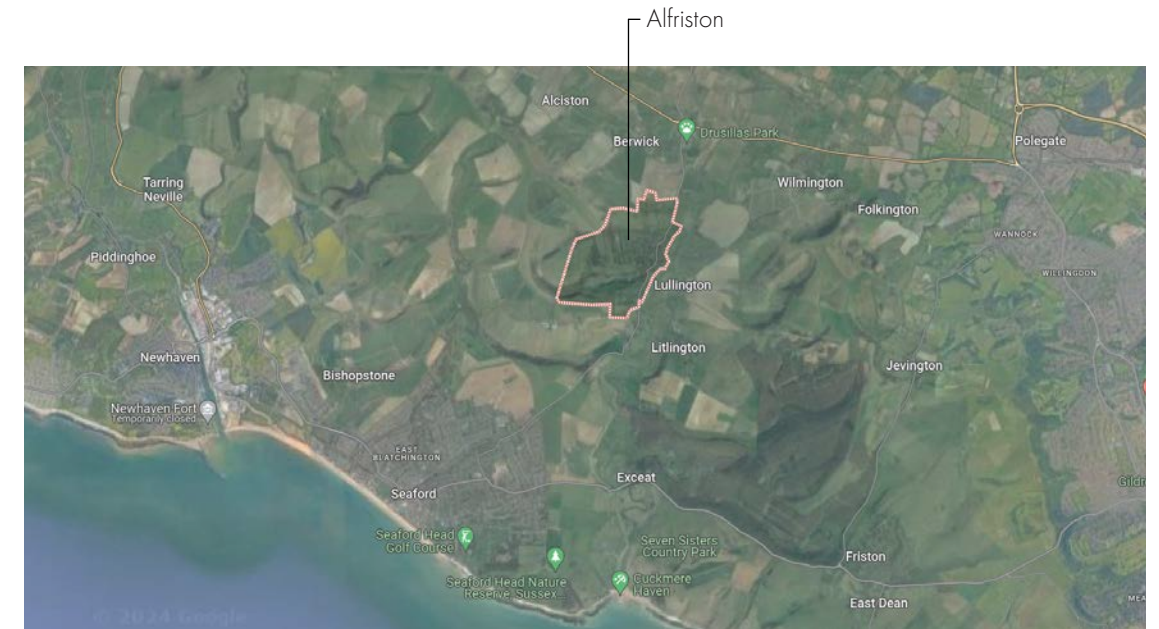
Fig. 1
Alfriston is a village and civil parish in the East Sussex district of Wealden, England. The village lies in the valley of the River Cuckmere, about four miles north-east of Seaford and south of the main A27 trunk road and part of the large area of Polegate. The parish had a population of 829 at the 2011 census

SITE LOCATION



© opensourcemappping

Alfriston



BN26 5SX

1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SURROUNDING AREA

The site is located in the South East region of England. The postcode is within the South Downs ward/ electoral division, which is in the constituency of Lewes. The Local Planning Authority is East Sussex County Council with the South Downs National Park Planning Authority, which controls and influences the development of land and buildings within the National Park's boundaries. The application site is fully designated - it lies on the edge of South Downs National Park, it is located in the heart of the Alfriston Conservation Area and it is considered to lie within the setting of Listed Buildings.

Alfriston is accessible via Alfriston Road off the A27 in the North, spanning across Eastbourne in the east and Brighton in the west, with Brighton regional airport and both with mainline railway stations. There are regular bus services to Alfriston from Brighton, Lewes and Eastbourne, operated by Countryliner, Renown Buses and Brighton and Hove buses. The closest railway station is at Seaford, around 4 miles away, with regular service to Brighton and Lewes, with onward connections to London.

The site is located in the south-west of Alfriston adjacent to the South Downs Way. It is accessible via an existing vehicular access off North Street from the east side of the Street, in close proximity to the Market Cross located centrally in the village at the 'Y' junction with North Street, High Street and West Street.

During the site analysis, it was recognised that the application site acts as a transition between a historic High Street environment of the High Street in the west and open countryside to the east, with existing vehicular access off the North Street. The site is located within a sensitive area within Alfriston Conservation Area and the historic core of the village, however, it is currently under-utilised comprising a couple of poor quality small derelict sheds/greenhouses (presumably built forms remained from allotments) and modest quality woodland. There are several poor-quality agricultural outbuildings and areas of hardstanding just outside the application site in the south, which is included within the Site Allocation Policy SD58. NB. accordingly to this Allocation the outbuildings are not considered worthy of conversion to residential use (para. 9.19) and given their age, these existing buildings are recommended to be demolished (para. 9.21).

According to the official Alfriston-village website:

'Alfriston is a village community surrounded by the Wealden South Downs. We sit near the eastern end of the South Downs Way where this national path splits three ways, going east, west and south, from the very centre of our historic village. Around the village, visitors can enjoy the famous St Andrew's church (the "Cathedral of the South Downs"), the clergy house (the National Trust's first property) and our wide range of galleries, cafés, pubs and shops. Alfriston hosts many events throughout the year including music festivals, traditional fetes, boot fares ... the list seems endless.'

The official Alfriston-village website describes further:

'There are plenty of things to see and do in and around Alfriston. We have an abundance of places to eat, drink and shop, and accommodations including camping, B&B, Inns and hotels. Walk the South Downs Way or just wander our lanes and the Tye. Stop for a Cream Tea, enjoy a Sunday Lunch and indulge in fine wines and real ales. Visit our wonderful shops selling ice creams, souvenirs, local produce, gifts and so much more. The village is welcoming, and warm and has a great community spirit, come and be part of that and enjoy a day out in the heart of the Cuckmere Valley.'



Fig. 2
South Downs Way, looking towards Alfriston

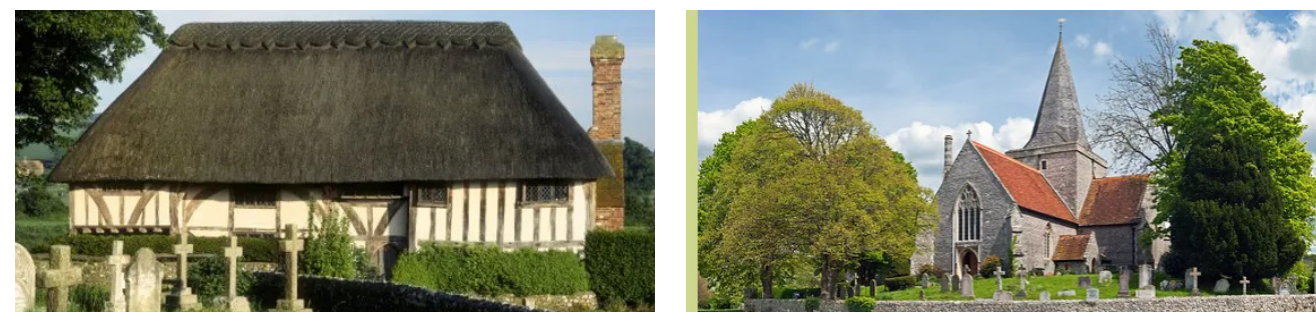


Fig. 3
Alfriston Clergy House - Garden & Shop (left), St. Andrews Church (right)

We have collaborated with various consultants such as Heritage and Historic Building Consultants who describe the site in their preliminary appraisal as follow:

'Alfriston is a highly sensitive medieval village situated within a downland valley in the South Downs National Park. The historic core of the village is centred on roads which form a 'Y' shape with the junction being the site of an ancient marketplace, though remains the commercial centre of the village today. The historic streets are lined by a fine grain of historic buildings that are largely double storey, though are 2.5 and 3 in places. These are all a similar scale with the older timber framed buildings tending to form focal points due to their construction rather than scale. The historic character of the village centre is thus very strong with a high retention of buildings from the 15th to the 19th centuries and some earlier. The proposed development site occupies a green space within the village core, though includes some dilapidated farm buildings to the south. This is located to the east of the old market area and North Street where it backs on to a terrace of Edwardian cottages. The site is visible from a gap in North Street as well as from a public footpath which runs north-south along the east flank of the site. This forms part of the 'Riverside' character area, with long views eastwards to the downs. To the south is River Lane which offers some glimpses of the site'.

With its plethora of footpaths and bridleways, the wider context is an ideal countryside environment for walkers, riders and cyclists as well as facilities for hospitality and leisure amenities in the village and at the adjacent villages and market towns. The close-by 14th Century historic Clergy House near the church was the first building to be acquired by the National Trust, moreover, the village boasts a pair of picturesque historic inns. The Market Cross was a famous smuggler's haunt during the 18th century, the headquarters of a gang headed by Stanton Collins. Author Rudyard Kipling used the exploits of Collins and his gang as inspiration for his poem, 'A Smuggler's Song'. Another popular inn is the Star, an attractive building which may date to 1345. The Star (known as the Star of Bethlehem until the early 16th century) was built by the monks of Battle Abbey as a stopover place for pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St Richard at Chichester. In the bar is a 'sanctuary post' which offered the protection of sanctuary to fugitives from the law.

It is clear that Alfriston plays a significant part as a tourist destination and an attractive spot for a relaxing break exploring the historic heritage of the village and the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside. The north-south track adjusting the application site that runs along the Cuckmere River offers a hike east or west up onto the Downs to soak up the natural peace and tranquillity of the area.

Please refer to the specialist Heritage and Historic Building Consultant statement for more details describing the site's history, listing of buildings and its immediate historical context assessment.



Fig. 4
Alfriston Market Cross at 'Y' junction with High Street, North Street and West Street



Fig. 5
Alfriston historical The George Inn pub serving local ale

1.3 OVERVIEW OF EXISTING SITE

The overall area of the site reads as approximately 2225m². The site is known as a former allotment site and is currently under-utilised with what is described in the Allocation Policy as 'modest quality woodland' - in accordance with the Allocation its current use is classified as 'woodland'.

The site benefits from an easterly aspect and views towards the open countryside together with direct access from North Street leading to rear gardens and garages that are owned by the residents occupying properties along North Street; The site sits at the end of the existing hardstanding 'drive' which acts as a more private residential space leading up to the rear of existing brick-faced two storey terraced properties. Within the proximity of the site, in the north, there is a large public 'pay and display parking area' catering for visitors arriving here by car or on coaches. The southern land adjacent to the application site forms part of the Site Allocation Policy SD58. As previously mentioned, the existing agricultural buildings on this land were recognised as part of this Policy as derelict and recommended to be demolished as opposed to converted to serve a residential use potentially in the future.

The site levels are falling towards the east before reaching the existing track running along the Cuckmere River. The existing ground levels on the eastern edge of the site are considerably higher than the track. The ground levels also fall towards the north. The eastern portion of the site is recognised to sit within Fluvial Flood Zones 2 and 3.

As per planning advice received during the Pre-application stage, the new residential development is proposed to be sited within the southern and central portion of the site outside flood zones 2 and 3, and the area within the Allocation site within Flood Zones 2/3 is not developed. Due to the potential for groundwater flooding ground monitoring and subsequently an adequate Sustainable Drainage Systems design were proposed for this site. Safe vehicular and pedestrian access and egress are provided through the site to both North Street and the Public Right Of Way to the east of the site - all taking into account the flood risk. Please refer to specialist consultants for Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement documents for further details.

Based on the existing access arrangement and lack of existing parking the proposed development takes advantage of re-using the suitable vehicular access. The off-site public car park area benefits the proposal in minimising the on-site parking requirement. Prepared specialist Transport Assessment for this site illustrate the effect of additional trips onto the surrounding road network as well as takes into account the local flood risk and identifies the impact on the historic roads in the village. Please refer to specialist consultants for Transport Assessment documents for further details.

The site is closely related to a priority habitat (Floodplain Grazing Marsh) associated with the Cuckmere River and other watercourses and protected species outside the site. Subsequently, the ecological survey, Arboricultural Report and Soft Landscape design were prepared to ensure that protected species in the local area will not be harmed and illustrate further the opportunities to enhance biodiversity in line with local strategies. The prepared for this site number of assessments identify all trees worthy of retention and therefore retained on this site.

Please further refer to specialist consultants for Ecology and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, Tree Protection Plan, Protected Species Survey, Archeological Assessment Land Contamination information and Landscape Design documents for further details.

The site is wholly within a sensitive Alfriston Conservation Area which is encapsulated within the tithe map of 1843. The Historic Advisor's specialist preliminary advice was sought during the Pre - application stage to inform the proposal. Their appraisal highlights that:

'Around 1840s time the site context was largely open space until the development of the Edwardian terrace between 1899 and 1925 along the North Street (...) From that time, the site to this day has a strong feeling of being within a backland setting which functions as an interface between the tight grain of the village centre and the open fields beyond. This is important visually but also maintains the legibility of both the village core and the rural area beyond. Within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, the site is part of the 'Riverside' character area; one of five areas identified for their special character. This has a particularly strong relationship with the open countryside to the east. The character area includes at least two detached, modern houses to the north and south of the site. These are not of any design merit or historic interest.

The main views of the site from the public realm are seen from the east where there are footpaths and public parking. The site is elevated as viewed from here and so when walking along the immediate track to the east, the whole site is unlikely to be visible, even when cleared. It may be more visible from a distance. The aspect from North Street would be a glimpsed view for most people walking or driving past the opening here. There may be some views from River Lane to the south but again these would be glimpsed through and only at the eastern end of the lane.

The current condition of the site made it difficult to assess views within it and from it. The broader context of the site, however, does help to inform its potential development, the nature of the surrounding buildings in the village and their spatial correspondence with roads and lanes. We can see clearly that linear development strongly corresponds with main roads, with other buildings forming a broken line (as with the villas in the west), or punctuating corners. Towards the eastern end of River Lane, the buildings are in more spacious surroundings and subsequently are less dense. If we were to take this assessment further south, this low density continues and is part of the character of both the 'Riverside' and 'the Tye' character areas to the south. The derelict buildings to the south of the site have not been described in this way, but are a small group which forms a courtyard. These are a mixture of modern brick structures and timber but do not retain any historic character. The materials used in the development of Alfriston village are typically all vernacular, though include more polite 18th-century variations of render and brickwork and use of flint.

The main materials are brick (often red and blue, laid in Flemish bond; also painted), flint, hanging tiles (often painted), Ship-lap weatherboard (white and natural), render, and timber frame'.

Please refer to specialist consultants for Heritage Statement for further details.

The proposal is driven by a sympathetic design including carefully selected materials, heights and scale that suitably reflect the design guidance set out in the 'Alfriston Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan' whereas the eastern boundary of the site is appropriately landscaped to provide a suitable transition to the river valley.

The new development causes no harm to neighbouring amenities, it respects and sympathetically complements the natural landscape- and historical-led character of the surroundings, as a response to our client brief, received Pre-application advice and a thorough understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the immediate site and context.

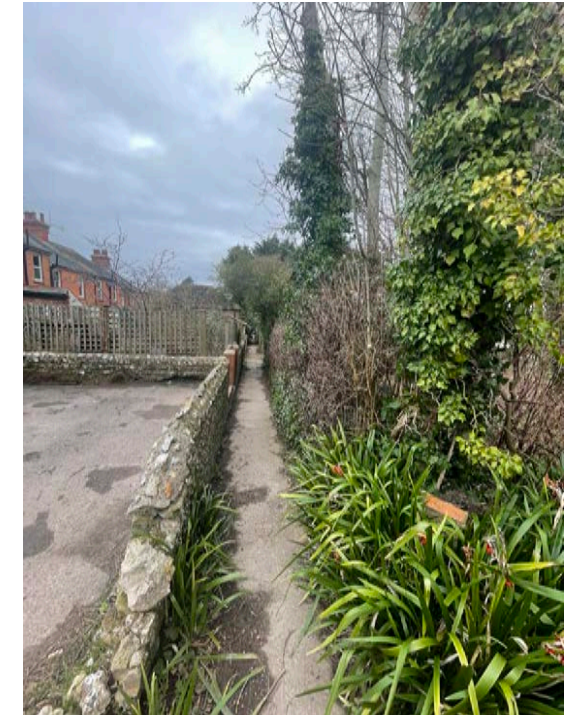
The proposed design will respond to the site with regards to:

- Historical and environmental context
- Existing site and boundary conditions
- Light and aspect

EXISTING BUILDING IMMEDIATE CONTEXT



EXISTING SITE



1.4 REASON FOR APPLICATION

One of the important aspects to include in the proposed design was to create sustainable and accessible residential development within the currently under-utilised site as described in Site Allocation Policy SD58 and to consider future demands for national housing shortage and sustainable delivery and energy-efficient habitable space. Consequently, the planning application is for high-quality units offering a contemporary form of living that reflects and improves the current living standards.

The proposal takes the further opportunity to improve the current energy efficiency of the property whilst avoiding detrimental visual impact on the external wider context. The approach is to deliver high-quality, sustainable and sympathetic residential accommodation that would respond to the present and future needs of the residents, whilst remaining in keeping within the context and surrounding environment. The proposal considers thermally efficient construction methods, traditional skilled workmanship and the use of local materials and trades, whereas the overall design complements the wider historical context and natural landscape surrounding.

This site has an allocation of 5-10 dwellings under Policy SD58 but given the nature of the site, a lower number though higher quality of 5 new residential units is proposed. This includes a terrace of four and one detached dwellinghouse. An introduction of a formal, new lane was discounted at the early stage to avoid compromising the character of the existing area and avoid introducing a more specific to the Market and High Street character areas. The linear development therefore is fragmented in its layout.

During the post-pre-application stage, a thorough study was undertaken as part of a feasibility stage. The overall design intent derives from the planners' feedback. Our studies initially took all the comments on board to pinpoint the opportunities and constraints, to then re-visit the site layout, scale, massing and materiality. Moreover, further thoughts were given to the external visual as well as environmental impact on the wider environments and landscaping in response to the site conditions - all to retain a connection between new and existing and nestle the proposed works into the surroundings.

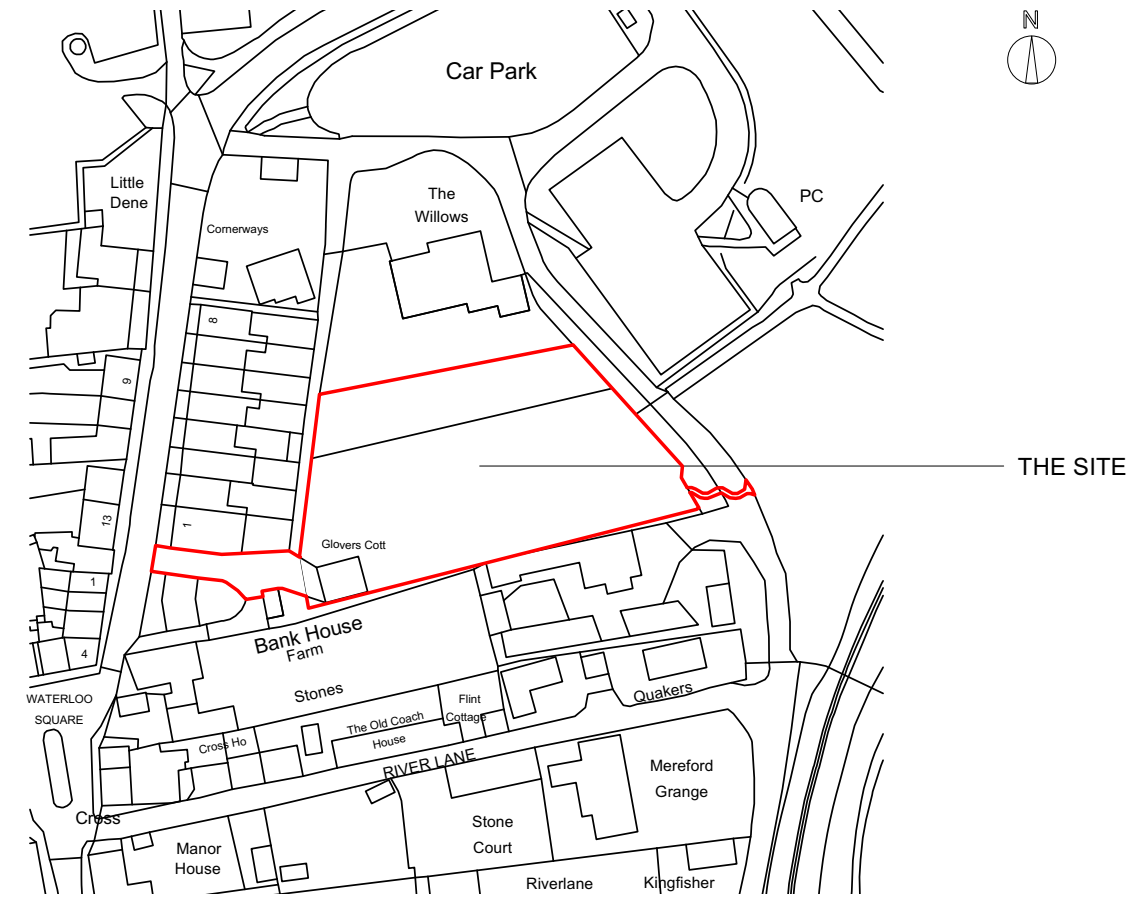


Fig. 6
Location plan (nts)

2.0 DESIGN OBJECTIVES | PLANNING POLICY ISSUE | ACCESS STATEMENT

2.1 DESIGN STRATEGY

The design strategy has been to assess and respond to the existing conditions whilst carefully reviewing the client's requirements and planning feedback received post-pre-application submission (SDNP/23/04349/PRE). The proposed 5 new dwellings offer a chance to sensibly fulfil the potential of the site offered as part of allocation under Site Allocation Policy SD58 whilst being sensitive to the immediate environment.

The design process has looked at the setting, scale, form and materiality that might impact the immediate surroundings. Following the initial investigations and site visits, it was decided to explore various options to maximise the functionality of the site to provide as well as private, semi-private and public space and to be respectful of the immediate environment's sensitivity of the listed building curtilage. It considers its overlooking, scale and materiality and is well thought out regarding existing construction, building fabric and energy efficiency.

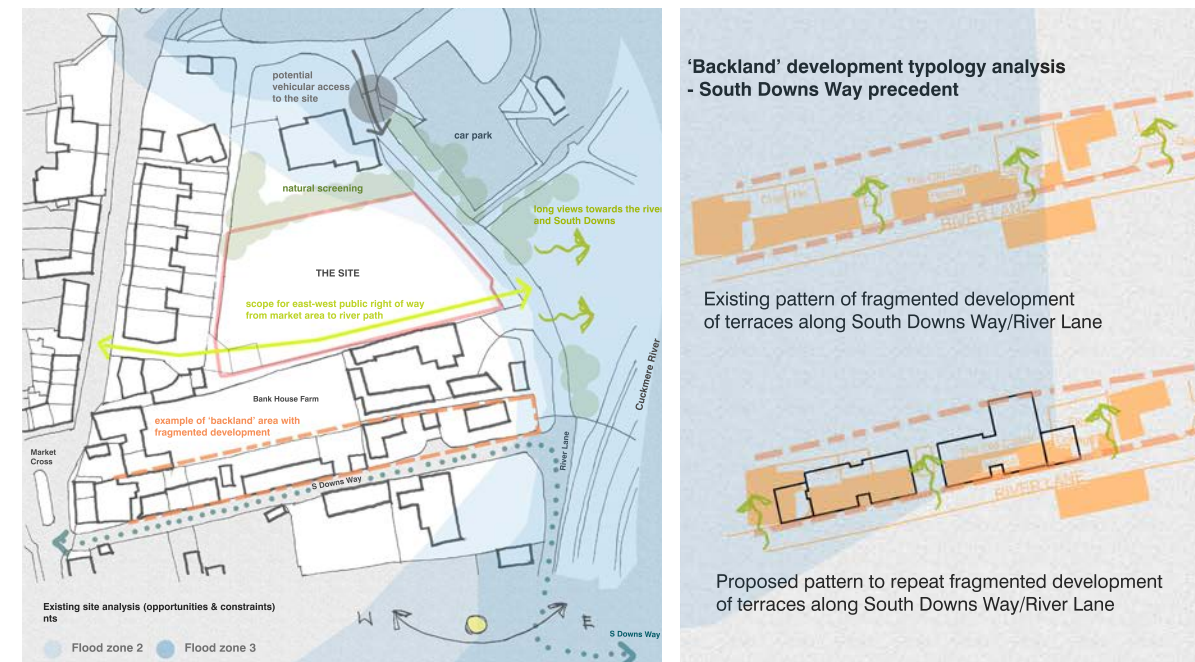


Fig. 7
Pre-application site analysis and opportunity and constraints study (produced by others, nts) which informed the proposed design intent

2.2 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

SDNP pre-application advice issued on 19th Dec 2023 (SDNP/23/04349/PRE) describes:

'The principle of development at this site has been established through the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) allocation policy SD58. The principle of a terrace of houses is considered broadly acceptable given the local precedents. However, a greater analysis of the site is required in order to inform the layout and design of the proposed development.'

In response to the above, extensive research was undertaken to include the site's historical, sustainability and landscape-led analysis. This research for this site has led to some interesting opportunities and constraints which informed the overall design strategy:

- The proposal attempts to consider the constraints provided by the historic and built environment - the adjacent properties, site boundaries, and existing building orientation.
- The design has taken the opportunity to consider linking new and existing and to create visual connections.

Vehicular access to the site would be from the west which utilises existing access from North Street and allows for further improvement of its current poor-quality surfacing.

- The scale and mass of the proposal are designed to be in keeping with the existing surrounding properties. In accordance with the appointed Historic Advisor's specialist preliminary advice:

'The linear development is to be more fragmented a good starting point from which to develop a layout (...) with a track running east-west which would provide a second public right of way from the market area down to the river paths'

Careful consideration was taken for the introduction of vehicular and pedestrian access to and through the site, minimising on-site parking where possible such that the character of the Alfriston Conservation Area is not harmfully impacted. Please see specialist consultants' information for more details.

Analysis with regards to flooding and infiltration was undertaken especially given that part of the site is with Flood Zone 3. Please see specialist consultants' information for more details.

The new external material palette is selected to minimise the visual impact further - see the 'Materiality' paragraph for further details

The quality design of the proposal overall (as well as the buildings themselves) is a main aim and a key to maintaining the character of the vernacular. The selection of materials for the building also adds some softness to the construction and is in-keeping with the historic centre and the main street. Avoided materials for this site were a mix of dark weatherboarding and highly contrasting white window frames.

The proposed construction in fabric first approach and introduction of renewables allows to maximise the energy efficiency and thermal performance of all units.

2.3 DESIGN OBJECTIVES | SUMMARY

It is the client's aim to create a well-considered, spatially efficient and thermally high-performing small-scale development with living spaces that sit comfortably at the ground floor level and benefit from private long gardens. Several options were considered for the design of the site layout, floor plans and elevational treatments during the early feasibility stage and revisited after receiving a considerable amount of formal feedback following the pre-application inquiry (SDNP/23/04349/PRE):

- The proposed design demonstrates a high standard of architectural design that can meet the user's requirements now and in the future.
- The proposed design offers high-quality, thermally efficient, contemporary internal spaces with accessible accommodation as part of spatial planning and circulation.
- The utmost care has been taken to design new elements to sit sensitively and sympathetically in the context of the existing and wider site context, its neighbours and the local landscape.

- Design, scale and impact on the character of the area:

The precedent of River Lane's undulating forms and recessed 'fragmented' backland development was a driving element for the overall design strategy. In accordance with our appointed Historic Advisor's specialist preliminary advice:

'The proposed development site occupies a green space within the village core, though includes some dilapidated farm buildings to the south. It is located to the east of the old market area and North Street where it backs onto a terrace of Edwardian cottages. The site is visible from a gap in North Street as well as from a public footpath which runs north-south along the east flank of the site. This forms part of the Riverside character area, with long views eastwards to the downs. To the south is River Lane which offers some glimpses of the site (...) Towards the eastern end of River Lane, the buildings are in more spacious surroundings and subsequently are less dense. This low density continues and is part of the character of both the Riverside and the Tye character area to the south.'

The new development allocating 5 units (this site has an allocation of 5-10 dwellings under Policy SD58) is considered modest in scale, sitting within a small central-southern part of the site (avoiding the risk of encroaching the flood zone) and with the frontages in line and along a new shared 'track' allowing a new 'link' between the west and east of the wider context. New dwellings were carefully designed to avoid over-massing and minimise the scale and impact and are considered to be modest and in keeping with the character of the neighbouring properties. The new 5 houses comprise a terrace of 4 plots and a detached plot no.5.

A terrace includes chimney stacks and various ridge heights to create a more undulating roof line to allow for 'break out' spaces and avoid continuous and monotonous main ridge line - in response to a suggestion from a Design Officer's pre-application feedback:

'The overall scale and mass of the buildings shown on the submitted plans is adequate and traditional gables and hipped roofs are acceptable. However, it is recommended that the roof's ridgeline is broken up to avoid a long monotonous roof. Chimneys (or well-designed vents) could help this.'

The terrace of 4 dwellings is a mix of two and single storeys whereas plot 5 is a two-storey detached property. The terrace comprises three 3-bedroom houses with a similar layout where plot 2 is similar but handed and a 1-bedroom single-storey bungalow with all accommodation designed as accessible and adaptive to future needs. The overall design strategy of the terrace was to minimise the scale and introduce single-storey elements that can be read as a series of 'extensions' that will accommodate easily accessible utility areas set out in a 'back-to-back' manner 'subdividing' habitable areas such as open plan kitchen-dining-living spaces making them spaced out more apart. Effectively, the separating 'party wall' for the majority of plots occurs between utilities and is kept at a low level. The living areas are located in the rear of the properties, within a single-storey element to reduce further the overall massing.

The projecting two-storey element at the rear culminates with a small gable to further break the roof ridge and reduce the ridge heights. Sequentiality allowed to keep the ridge level below the existing pitched roof ridge of the existing terrace block along North Street - the neighbouring properties in closest proximity, which minimises the impact on the immediate vicinity.

There are two single-storey garages located at each end of the properties to keep the scale of the overall development at a minimum whilst exposed to the external environment, these have the potential to incorporate future 'green roofs' and landscaping treatment such as small timber pergola as a consistent and cohesive element to the overall design strategy - these treatments will allow to soften the overall immediate visual impact on the wider character of the surroundings.

The new development avoids overlooking issues by the omission of fenestration on the west for plot 1, and east for plot 5 - the general strategy was to focus all views on a 'back-to-back' approach with fenestration at ground and first-floor levels facing north and south, with an exception of plot 5 which will benefit from the wider views, despite the carefully considered set-back from the existing track along the Cuckmere River.

Generally, all principle elevations face the south and are set out in line with the new shared surfacing allowing for residents vehicular traffic and wider public pedestrian traffic. Whereas the front entrances are set back within a covered recess allowing protection from the elements porch area. The main entrance doors where they face each other, are screened from each other with a slatted timber screen set out on the 'party wall' axis. - this louvred screen allows further privacy and potential space for built-in incorporated seating for perching or a planter. The recessed porch area is large enough to allow for perhaps a temporary store of buggies or bikes and becomes a semi-private space enabling personalisation to add to the individuality of each unit. Additional storage space was carefully considered, this time as enclosed and secure bespoke storage space - for 3 beds (plots 1,2 and 4) these are optional and additional storage to keep two bins as they can be also kept in the individually dedicated garages.

The proposed internal layout will provide a contemporary 'day-time' space with a living-dining-kitchen open-plan area to create flexible, social and attractive living and entertaining, which overlooks a minimum 10m long gardens before reaching the 2.0m wide natural screening/planting buffer. The 3-bedroom properties will accommodate 'night-time' spaces on the first floor. No roof lights are proposed with the exception of one roof light dedicated to the bungalow plot 3 at a ground floor level to avoid negative impact on the character of the area. This roof light can receive an automated 'dawn-to-dusk' blind if required - all in accordance with the 'dark skies' guidelines.

The proposal is naturally screened from all sides and rear and is not thought to have any detrimental impact on neighbours, nor set a precedent for a new building line.

2.3.1 LOCATION | ORIENTATION | SHADING

- The orientation of the new dwellings has been carefully considered in terms of daylight and solar gain. New south-facing windows have been proposed not only to provide ventilation to new habitable space but also for natural solar gain throughout the year.

- The proposed layout of the internal spaces has been carefully planned to provide high-quality areas that create flexible, social and attractive living spaces across the ground floor that have a strong and practical relationship with the remaining areas including external spaces, resulting in a close connection within the house, place and wider setting.



Fig. 8
Proposed block plan

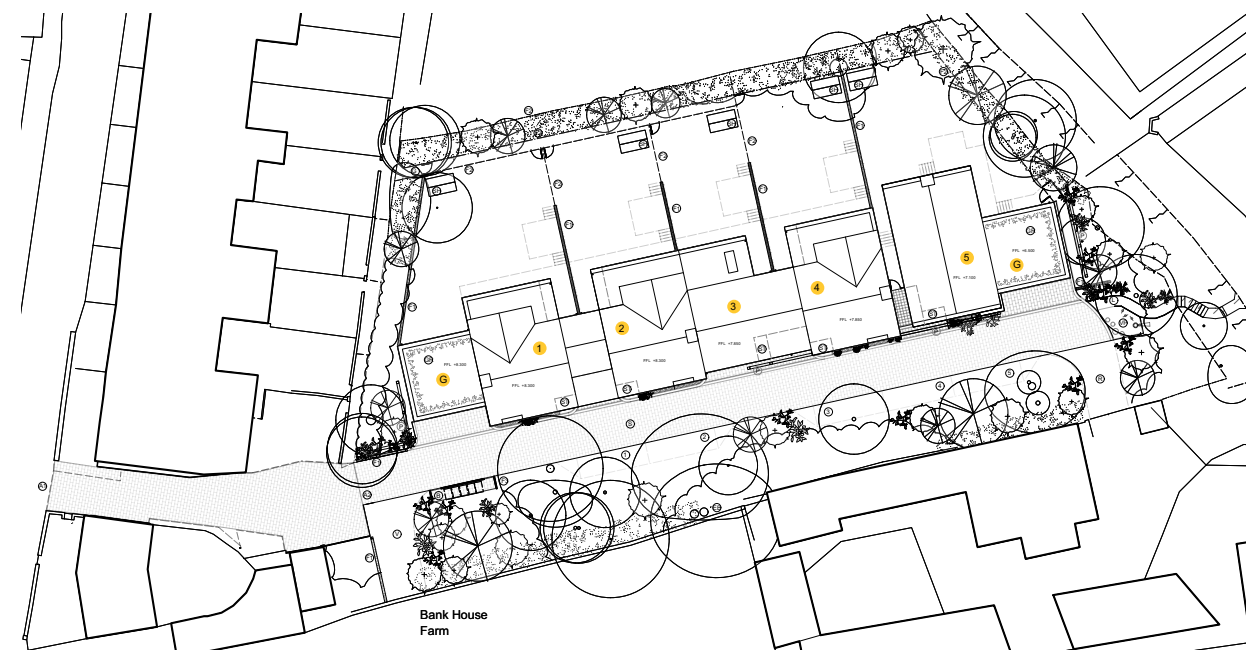


Fig. 9
Proposed site plan

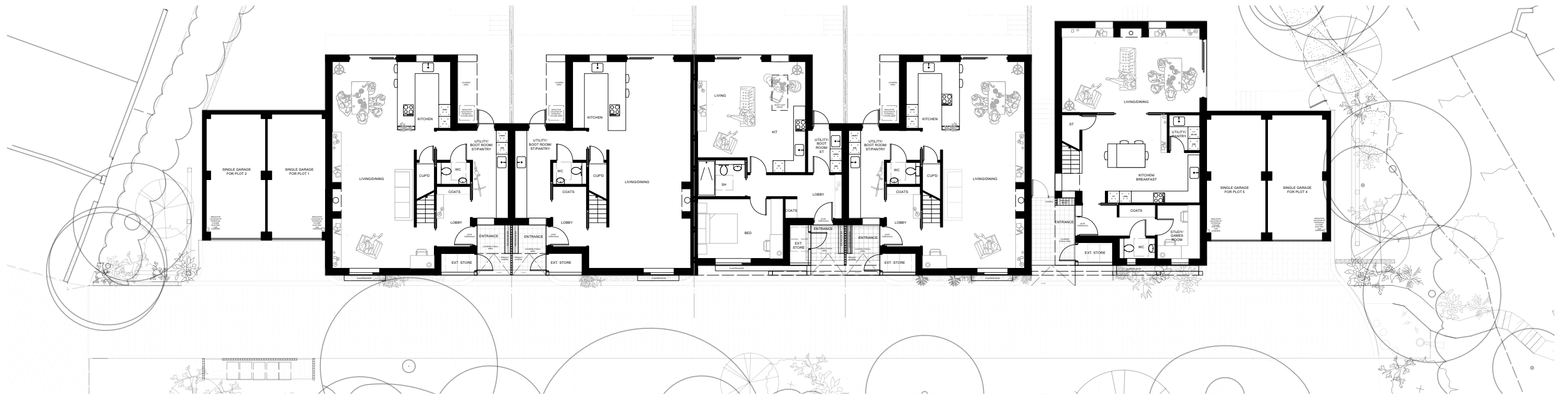


Fig. 10
Proposed ground floor plans

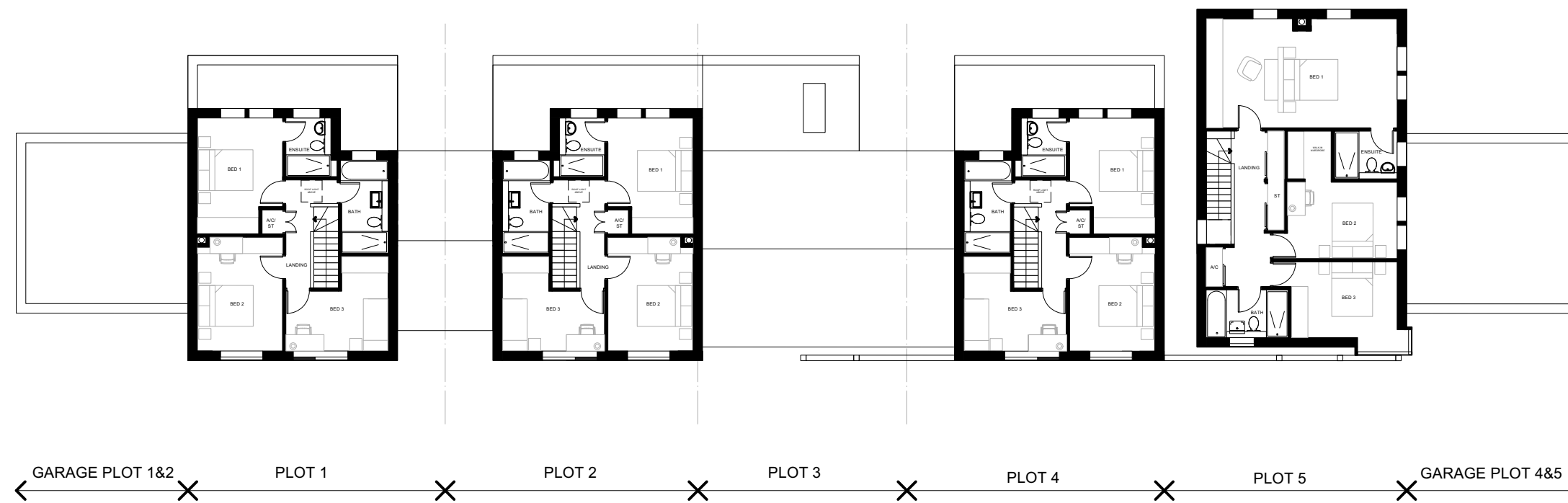


Fig. 11
Proposed first floor plans

2.3.2 ACCESS – ENSURING EASE OF ACCESS FOR ALL

In line with the Equality Act 2010, in all instances, it is intended to create flush and level thresholds where possible, to allow for a seamless transition between the inside and outside and prevent any limitation to the less mobile occupants or visitors. The proposal offers all of the living spaces on the ground floor throughout. The design is therefore proof of any adaptations that may be required which proposes a durable, sustainable and adaptable solution, and sufficient internal space to meet the needs of a range of users.

2.3.3 FORM | MATERIALITY

- The proposal is designed to follow the principle established during the pre-application stage, reviewed accordingly and developed further following the received feedback from the consulted SDNP Design Officer. The overall design strategy is based on a cohesive selection of a few external materials that are contextual, in keeping with the existing surrounding properties and allow to promote local and skilled craftsmanship. But also, in spite of the material palette kept to the minimal, to promote individuality and to become of a different character although sitting comfortably side-by-side among others. The existing 'backland' fragmented precedent along River Lane compromised a selection of two and single-storey dwellings drawing on the barn typology with timber cladding or cottage typology with flint, brick or clay tile hanging - this was the very inspiration behind the concept of personalised units that would read more of a 'collage' of a limited pallet of materials that although used in various manner would amalgamate the development creating a cohesive and attractive selection of elevational treatments. Another part of the 'collage' concept and further take on personalisation (as opposed to the repetitiveness of an 'identikit') is to allow another small gesture offered as a choice to the future residents which is the choice of a colour of the main entrance door, albeit from a particular pallets of 'heritage' colours (for instance 'Little Greene' heritage paint swatch) which is sympathetic to existing historical context and a character of the Conservation Area.

In accordance with our appointed Historic Advisor's specialist preliminary advice:

'The materials used in the development of Alfriston village are typically all vernacular, though include more polite 18th-century variations of render and brickwork and use of flint. The main materials are brick (often red and blue, laid in Flemish bond; also painted), flint, hanging tiles (often painted), ship-lap weatherboard (white and natural), render, and timber frame.'

The new external material palette is selected to minimise the visual impact further, by use of traditional materials, whilst minimalistic and sympathetic treatment such as panels of brickwork used directionally or as perforated screens, flintwork, timber cladding, slate and clay tiles. With regards to construction and materials, the consideration is to promote the longevity, sustainability and use of traditional materials such as flint and local traditional skilled craftsmen which has broader conservation benefits.

Therefore, the aim in the future is to seek valuable future advice on the type of flint work from a local specialist such as David Smith www.flintman.co.uk or Duncan Berry www.berrystonework.co.uk which would provide a build quality that is justified in a place like Alfriston. Promoting conservation through traditional construction techniques seems particularly poignant here given that the Clergy House near the church was the first building to be acquired by the National Trust.

The materiality takes notes from the existing context, moreover, it promotes a sustainable approach when considering locally sourced brickwork, clay tiles or timber. Additionally, timber is used as part of the external small structures such as pergolas or colonnades as part of the landscaping design. This treatment allows to soften the robustness of masonry but also to link and frame external spaces along the frontages which compliments the overall context.

Aesthetically the external materials and overall concept aim to make a connection with the existing surroundings and landscape with its simple contextual material palette. The proposed external treatments enhance the existing visual impact within the wider environment and complement the existing residential use.

The contemporary architectural design is our response to address a juxtaposition to distinguish layers of time and define the contemporary forms that will sit comfortably within the existing traditional vernacular architecture, whilst being appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, massing, density, form, materials, and elevational and vernacular detailing.

A thorough study was undertaken as part of the material selection - please see our appointed Historic Advisor's specialist or further details and the enclosed Appendix A referencing the existing and proposed material selection and precedents as part of the scheme development process.

2.3.4 PRIVATE, SEMI-PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPACES

One of the aims of this developed scheme is to balance the private, semi-private and public spaces within. All new properties benefit from recessed, covered porch areas leading to the private entrances, and they all receive attractive, generous, private individual gardens. Nonetheless, the semi-private and public place was equally significant to promote which is to benefit all. The semi-private frontages set closely to the line of the shared and public 'track' allow benching, ledges, space for individual pots and planters as part of the overall design to allow for 'active' frontages as well as and 'activities'. The future residents, and subsequently the design of the development, are integrated within the external environment and share the space along the 'track' with the public. The front building line is set close to the lane, whereas the frontages benefit from a narrow defensible space, ensuring that the lane and building's relationship with the route is locally characteristic. This approach is based on the positive local precedents.

Opening the access further to the River allows the public to take a safe journey along the shared surface which has a minimum of vehicle traffic (resident's use only) and predominantly pedestrian traffic. The less formal appropriately surfaced public right of way culminates with a dedicated viewing point area that is an important part of the overall external landscape design. This space is shown indicatively to propose an idea of a landscaped public amenity comprising seating, sculpture/signpost/wayfinding - suggested to be commissioned by the local artists and a 'pit stop' or 'checkpoint' along the journey before re-connecting with South Downs Way. The concept of an amenity at the east end of the site overlooking the open countryside is put forward to offer to share this attractive part of the site with the public as well as to pause and appreciate the natural surroundings. The proposal includes indicative examples of material treatment including corten/weathered steel, natural timber and stone - the materials found within the material pallet of the new dwellings.

2.3.5 BOUNDARY TREATMENT

The plans propose boundaries comprising traditional flint walling and cleft chestnut timber traditionally constructed posts and rail. This type of boundary treatment was selected based on existing precedents within the area and seen on-site. Existing flint low-level walls along the western and southern site boundary are in poor condition, therefore as part of the proposal, these existing traditionally crafted walls are to be preserved and made good or reinstated in sections using matching materials and techniques. The proposal is to repair the flint wall along the southern and western boundary as well as to retain enhance and thicken the existing hedge. Please see the specialist Soft Landscape Designer's documents for further details.



Fig. 12
Alfriston, River Lane 'backland' fragmented development precedent collage



KEY

- ① PERFORATED BRICK
- ② TEXTURED BRICK
- ③ TIMBER CLADDING
- ④ FLINT
- ⑤ CLAY TILE
- ⑥ CORTEN/PPC METAL
- ⑦ FRONT DOOR COLOUR: SELECTED BY RESIDENTS FROM HERITAGE COLOUR PALETTE (EXAMPLE SWATCH BELOW)
- ⑧ TIMBER COLONNADE
- ⑨ NATURAL SLATE
- ⑩ STAINED OR PAINTED TMBER FASCIA
- ⑪ STAINED OR PAINTED TMBER SLATTED SCREEN
- ⑫ PPC OR PAINTED TMBER GARAGE DOOR

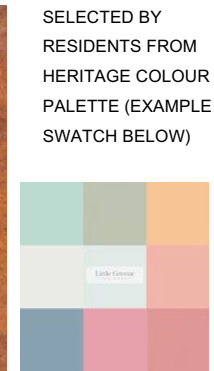
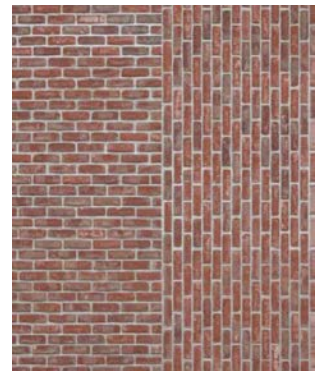


Fig. 13
Proposed minimal but cohesive and contextual material palette

The proposed stone walling is kept at a low level and frames the private gardens in the east and west as well as subdivides all the individual gardens to retain privacy. Whereas the timber post and rail fencing are proposed to bind the site in the north along the planting buffer to allow free migration of species and natural habitats within. The natural timber and stone materials can be found within the historical and natural context as well as in the material pallet of the new dwellings and are considered to be sympathetic to the overall proposal and its context. Equally, the traditional design of the boundaries drawn on the surroundings and the history of the place promotes conservation through traditional construction techniques which are particularly poignant for this site.

2.3.6 HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING TREATMENT

The proposal includes indicative examples of material treatment of the surfacing within the vicinity of the site- immediately along North Street, along the High Street and in the heart of historic Alfriston, as well as along River Lane which is en route and part of the South Downs Way trail. These examples include clay tiling, clay bricks (laid flat on edge), pavements, stone kerbs and cobbles/flint - during the site visits all the materials were found arranged in distinctive patterns which then form a base of further study and inspiration for the proposed designs.

The proposed materials are derived from the existing surfacing and patterns and incorporated into the design of the new 'shared surface and porch/private entrance areas as indicated on the drawings. These materials are in keeping within the existing but also link to the proposed material pallet of the dwellings. of the new dwellings. It was important to create a cohesive scheme that drew on the traditional craft and techniques promoting local skilled trade and historic values.

The proposed surfacing is permeable and allows for a sustainable drainage approach. Please see the specialist civil engineer's documents for more details.

In addition, as part of the proposal it is offered to repair the existing vehicle access which is in a very poor condition. The existing tarmac surface is to be replaced with new attractive, sympathetic and traditional clay pavements to match these seen along the High Street, for then to the same treatment to continuous throughout the shared access along the site. This creates cohesion between existing and new and allows to link visually North Street to the new lane ahead leading towards the River.

The soft landscape design is an integral part of the overall design strategy. The proposal protects and enhances trees within the site worthy of retention, and allows for new planting including approx. 2.0m wide planting buffer along the north boundary and allows new native species within the amenity. Please see specialist soft landscape designer, arboriculturist and ecology consultants' documents for further details.

2.3.7 CAR PARKING

The parking provision is kept to a minimum to avoid the detrimental effect of suburbanisation of the development. The site benefits from a short walking distance from two public car parks that allow to reduce the parking to a minimum. No visitor parking is provided as this is available in the area. Resident parking is also available at the Dene Car Park, where the Council runs a resident permit system, as a viable solution for alternative parking arrangements and reducing the negative implications of designing a high-quality scheme in a constrained site. Subsequently, by reducing/omitting car parking within the site, there are more opportunities for an efficient use of land for other uses.

The 3-bedroom properties benefit from a semi-privately accessed long drive along the frontages with an appropriately surfaced shared space that leads to private individual garages. The proposed remaining car park spaces are located along the shared surface and within the green margin as parallel parking, allowing additional space per dwelling. These are incorporated within reinforced grass areas to allow a more sympathetic and less formal approach - the reinforced grass areas also include a reversing space and temporary parking for delivery vans. All to promote the natural landscape to maximise the positive visual impact on the character of the area and impact on the natural environment.

The proposal does not interfere with the safety, function or character of the road, or have adverse environmental implications, so it is considered that the scheme complies with the parking provision. Please see the specialist transport engineer's reports for more details.

2.3.8 CYCLING | REFUSE | STORAGE OPTIONS

The proposed garages can be utilised to store bikes and bins (1 no waste and 1 no recycling). In addition, as part of the design strategy the decision was made to allow for a dedicated bespoke, secure, ventilated and enclosed external storage built-in along the frontages and as part of the front porches of each property. These can allow to store bikes or bins. Alternatively, garden sheds located in each garden can serve as optional lockable storage for bikes and bins or for additional bikes.

Moreover, each property benefits from a large utility 'messy and wet' area with easy access in and out, interconnecting the front and the external rear spaces - this allows potentially yet another space to store belongings including bikes, pushchairs, scooters, sport equipment etc depending on user's needs at the time. Subsequently, the variety of storage options creates an additional sustainable model within the site to cater for users' future needs and allow flexibility and adaptations if required in the future.

2.4 SITTING | ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT | SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The building forms sit comfortably within the existing context. The intention is to achieve a spatially efficient accommodation within the existing available space to 'nestle' it into the existing surroundings. The goal is to achieve an energy-efficient and sustainable outcome in relation to the context and particularities of the site - analysis of the orientation in terms of solar gain and heat capture in the winter.

The new building fabric is based upon a fabric-first approach, which prioritises a thermally high-performing building envelope from the outset to achieve a 19% improvement in CO2 emissions and 20% green energy for CO2 reductions. By reducing the amount of energy lost through gaps in the thermal envelope less energy is needed to provide a comfortable living environment. The aim is to reduce the energy input requirements of the new elements by high insulation levels in the new walls, roofs and floors and maximise air tightness through accredited detailing and quality double or triple-glazed windows.

The proposal considers the following:

- Passive solar heat gain through the considered design of openings and associated shading.
- High insulation levels for new walls, roofs and floors to minimise the energy required to heat the building.
- High-performing double or triple-glazed new windows and doors.
- Air source heat pumps renewable energy source dedicated for each dwelling for this development. These are to be potentially located at the rear of properties and within a dedicated external store area



Fig. 13

Existing surface and material treatment precedents in the heart of Alfriston (top and mid-row), including tiled paving, clay, brick, stone kerbs and cobble margins.

Existing poor condition tarmac surface (bottom row) at the access off North Road



Fig. 14

Existing boundaries and material treatment precedents seen on site and near Alfriston (top row), including flint walling and cleft chestnut post and rail fencing.

Existing steps material and treatment found near Alfriston (mid row), including steel rod and natural timber boarding and post and rail balustrade design for overall concept.

Precedent for seating and sculpture /sign post/wayfinding (bottom row) including corten/weathered steel, natural timber materials and informal soft landscape design for overall concept.

- Electrical vehicle charging points allocated to each plot if required
- Locally sourced materials and workforce as far as possible to minimise the energy and carbon expended during construction. Use of any substituted, re-used, recycled or other green materials in construction (including GiB or FSC timber) as an alternative to plastic building products where possible.
- Low water usage (no more than 110 litres/person/day predicted mains water consumption), low energy light fittings and white goods throughout.
- Compost bins available for gardens

The project follows a hierarchical design methodology to achieve lower energy consumption and ensure that resources are well spent in the most beneficial and cost-effective areas.

2.5 ACCESS STATEMENT

Inclusive design has been considered throughout the design process:

- gently sloping access to the main entrance to allow for level thresholds
- the proposal provides accessibility internally within all units, whereas plot 3 is a single-storey bungalow as a more adaptive approach that allows more accessible living on the ground level.
- the proposal allows adequate levelled areas for a potential patio instead of an immediate stepped approach, despite the change in ground level at the rear of properties,
- the proposal provides accessibility throughout the wider site - follows or improves on the existing ground levels, allows repairs to existing poor condition surfacing where existing access, and new part 'M' compliant surface finishes throughout such as permeable brick or clay pavours.

2.6 PLANNING POLICY

The Alfriston site falls within the constituency of Lewes. The Local Planning Authority is East Sussex County Council with the South Downs National Park Planning Authority. The application site is located in a designated Conservation Area and it is considered to lie within the setting of Listed Buildings.

The applicant sought pre-application advice (inquiry was received on 16 October 2023 SDNP/23/04349/PRE by South Downs National Park Authority) and received an executive summary from the Officer, following their site visit on 15th November 2023 and further discussions, which fully informs this proposal and subsequently, the final detail planning application including plans and documents is provided which addresses the previously received formal feedback.

South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) allocation policy SD58.

The principle of development at this site has been established through the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) allocation policy SD58. However, this application site accounts for a part of the land allocated within Policy SD58. The policy describes the principle of a terrace of houses within the allocated site as considered broadly acceptable given the local precedents.

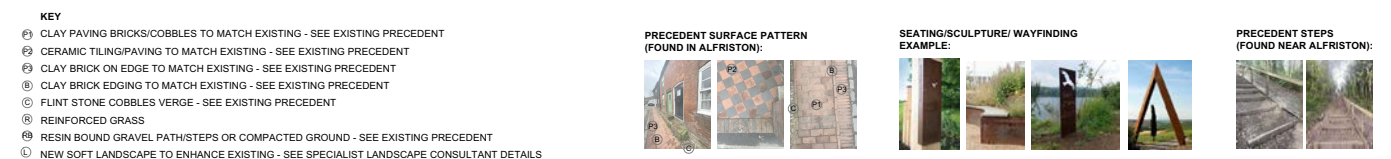
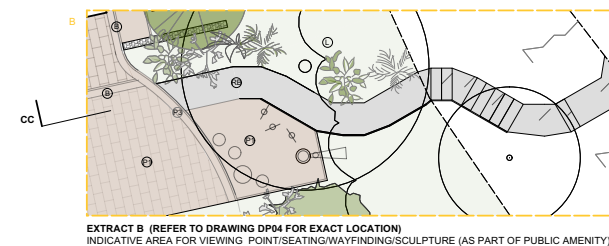
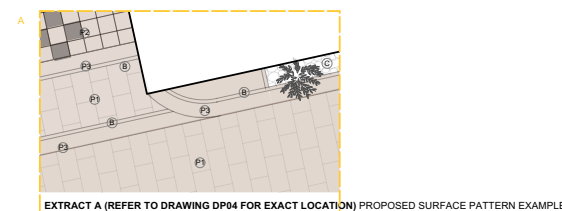
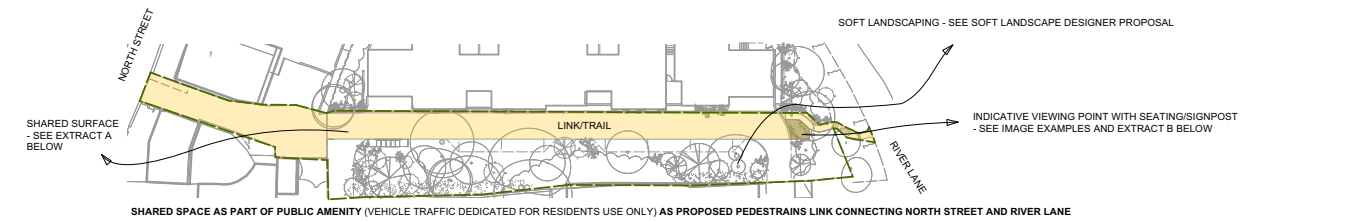


Fig. 15 Proposed cohesive and contextual design, including boundaries, hard and soft landscape to allow private, semi-private and public spaces.

The greater analysis of the site informs the layout and design of the proposed development. A landscape-led approach is adopted, it includes careful consideration with regard to vehicular and pedestrian access to and through the site and minimising on-site parking where possible, such that the character of the Alfriston Conservation Area is not harmfully impacted. Please see the specialist transport engineer's assessment for further details. It also includes analysis with regard to flooding and infiltration, as part of the site, is with Flood Zone 3. Please see the specialist civil engineer's assessment for further details.

The principle of development at this site has been established through the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) allocation policy SD58. Policy SD58 allocates the site for the development of between 5 and 10 residential dwellings (Class C3 Use). The proposal meets the criteria described in this Policy and the following site-specific requirements:

- to conserve and enhance the form and fabric of the Alfriston Conservation Area and preserve the setting of local heritage assets; This criteria is met as previously described in this document. The proposal respects the character of the area which is set within the allocated site in the heart of the Conservation Area and within the curtilage of Listed buildings, allowing 5 out of the allocated 5-10 units within the site with emphasis on the quality of the overall design, thus the proposal is not considered to be an overbearing form nor detrimental to the neighbour's amenities. It is appropriate in scale and design and in keeping with the existing character of neighbouring properties, therefore it has no adverse impact on the character of the area. The design, scale and materials of the development are not considered to result in a detrimental impact on the character of the area and would not conflict with the South Downs National Park and its special qualities. The proposal protects and maintains important sites and features of the historic and built environment, including local vernacular buildings and designed and historic landscapes, and, where appropriate, helps to improve, repair and make good existing features such as boundary treatment and surfacing and secure a sustainable future for those heritage assets at risk. For further details please see the Heritage Statement prepared by the appointed Heritage consultant.

- to provide a suitably landscaped transition to the river valley; This criteria is met as previously described in this document. For further details please see Heritage Statement, Soft Landscape Design, Civil Engineer's and Transport Statements and Ecology Assessment prepared by the appointed consultants.

- all housing to be located in Flood Zone 1; This criterion is met as previously described in this document. For further details please see the Civil Engineer consultants documents.

- safe vehicular and pedestrian access and egress should be provided during flooding; There is only one vehicular access to the west (the secondary access to the east was removed during the pre-application stage), whereas floor levels of habitable areas are designed to take into account flood risk and climate change with levels indicated on the plans. This criterion is met. For further details please see the Civil Engineer consultants documents.

- suitable internal road layout which provides for larger vehicles including refuse vehicles; This criteria is met. For further details please see the Transport consultants documents.

- publicly accessible route provided through the site from North Street to the east of the site; This criteria is met as previously described in this document. For further details please see the Transport Statement prepared by the appointed consultants.

- enhanced biodiversity and provisions for protected species; This criterion is met as previously described in this document. Please see specialist soft landscape designer, arboriculturist and ecology consultants' documents for further details.

- necessary vehicular parking on-site to avoid additional on-street parking on local roads; This criteria is met as previously described in this document. For further details please see the Transport Statement prepared by the appointed consultant.

- avoidance of security gates or other barriers which preclude the residential areas of the development from becoming fully accessible, inclusive and integrated into the local community; This criterion is met as indicated on the plans and described previously, in order for the development to have an overall positive impact on the existing local community and to be successfully integrated, the site access is open to the public, thus no gates or barriers are proposed which enables to include the access and the shared 'track' leading from/to the River is to be considered as public right of way. For further details please see the Transport Statement prepared by the appointed consultant.

- contribution to ecosystem services; This criterion is met as previously described in this document. The development proposal addresses the loss of trees with the provision of higher quality new tree planting on-site, new planting suitable for pollinating species; new hard-surfaced areas to be permeable surfaces and soft landscaping where possible to maximise infiltration of water and reduce surface water run-off. Please see the specialist Civil engineers, Transport consultants, Soft Landscape designers, Arboriculturist and Ecology consultants' documents for further details.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD4 of the SDLP

Policy SD4 of the SDLP sets out that development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance landscape character. As previously described, the proposal is informed by the landscape character, reflects the context and type of landscape in which the site is located and is based on a meaningful understanding of the context and character of an area and those positive characteristics which define local distinctiveness.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD5 of the SDLP

Policy SD5 of the SDLP sets out that development proposals will only be permitted where they adopt a landscape-led approach and respect for the local character; As previously described, through a thorough site analysis which informed the final proposal and sensitive and high-quality design, this scheme positively contributes to the overall character and appearance of the area. No concern has been raised with regard to overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing or loss of light during the pre-application stage, thus the overall design strategy is retained. The proposal illustrates that there is no harm to neighbouring amenity in this regard.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD9 of the SDLP

Policy SD9 of the SDLP sets out that development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, giving particular regard to ecological networks and areas with high potential for priority habitat restoration or creation; It is clear that a large number of trees is required to be removed as part of the current proposal with the key trees retained, along the boundaries. Please see the ecological report for more information with regards to an overall net loss in biodiversity of the site and to evidence an overall net gain in biodiversity in accordance with NPPF and Local Plan Policy SD9 using the latest version of the Defra Biodiversity Metric.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD11 of the SDLP

Policy SD11 of the SDLP sets out that development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance trees, hedgerows and woodlands; As previously described, the development proposals retained trees, hedgerows and woodland where possible and demonstrated the analysis of the site by providing a full site survey, including an Ecological Survey, Arboricultural Method Statement and associated Tree Protection Plan, and by including a management plan. Please see specialist Arboriculturist and Ecology consultants' documents for further details.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD12 of the SDLP

Policy SD12 of the SDLP sets out that development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance the historic environment; As previously described, the proposal's aim to safeguard heritage assets and their setting. The development proposal sits within a Conservation Area and represents the cohesive design which preserves or enhances the special architectural historic interest, character or appearance of the conservation area. The existing access joins the main road through the town, and the proposal allows minimum vehicular traffic on site, therefore contributes positively in terms of the impact on the road network and the impact on the Conservation Area and does not contribute to accelerating the existing problem of traffic volume on conservation grounds.

River Lane building forms are put forward as a precedent for this site as it provides a good source of forms and visual cues. The buildings need to be modest and display variety in a form that avoids monotonous ridgelines or first floors over parking areas. The contemporary approach to the design comprises a choice of traditional and contextual materials to ensure the development is tied to its wider context. Please see specialist Heritage consultants' documents for further details.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected; The relevant historic environment record is provided as part of this application for the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Policy SD16 of the SDLP accords with Paragraph 194.

Policy SD16 of the SDLP accords with Paragraph 194. The County Archaeologist advises that the proposed development site lies within an Archaeological Notification area (a non-designated heritage asset) associated with the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval market town of Alfriston, which still contains a significant number of historic buildings; Please see the specialist Heritage consultants' documents for further details on the results of a Historic Environment Record (HER) Consultation Report and evaluation survey, regarding information about the presence and significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected.

SDLP Policy SD19

SDLP Policy SD19 sets out that proposals must demonstrate the continued safe and efficient operation of the strategic and local road networks in accordance with The County Highway Authority (CHA); The guidance is addressed within the proposal. For the new development of 5 residential dwellings allowance is for suitable vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access, the lane includes sufficient width, and gradient and utilised is existing vehicular access with adequate visibility splays. The proposed main vehicular access is suggested to be from the public car park to the north of the site which exits onto North Street.

River Lane to the south of the site is a public highway with the eastern part being an unadopted public highway - it is narrow (being of single vehicular width), lacks footways and has a substandard junction with the High Street with very limited visibility and no scope to improve. Therefore any increase in vehicular traffic using River Lane is discouraged.

As described previously in this document, there is appropriate on-site vehicle and cycle parking - the number of spaces is kept at minimum standards, and on-site vehicle turning for vehicles likely to visit the site. Please see the specialist Transport Assessment for more details to demonstrate that the proposal considers the appropriate refuse vehicle turnings, the likely trip generation of the existing and proposed development, appropriate improvements to the local network to ensure safe access, and accessibility by all modes of transport, pedestrian/cycle links to the High Street to the west and the Public rights of way to the east, adequate highway construction as well as the impact on the character of the area and the Conservation Area.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Policy SD27 of the SDLP

Policy SD27 of the SDLP sets out that residential development proposals should deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet projected household needs for the local area; The proposals provide numbers of dwellings of sizes to accord the relevant broad mix.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of this policy.

Dark Skies

Policy SD8 of the SDLP seeks to conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of dark night skies and the integrity of the Dark Sky Core; Development demonstrates that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken. All windows are of modest size with one set of sliding doors looking out over the garden and one roof light (plot 3) at a single-storey height. Mitigation measures to minimise light spillage can be implemented in accordance with Advice Note on Dark Skies, including an appendix on glazing - automated black-out blinds should be used to trigger sometime after sunset.

For the external lighting, all lighting is domestic in style and purpose. The luminaire will be 500 lumens and less, 3000K CCT and less, proximity timers to ensure lighting is off when not required, downward pointing only. Aesthetic accent lighting is avoided, and lighting is only used for access and safety.

The SDNPA

The SDNPA expects that the design process for any development proposal should follow the landscape-led approach to design. This process is explained in the Design Guide SPD (Part B) and it applies to all stages of design, from layout to detail;

- As previously described, the proposal undergone thorough site analysis and embraces the landscape-led approach to inform the design. The data gathered by specialist consultants addressed the findings and formed relevant landscape evidence demonstrating a good understanding of the site's context. Using this data the landscape strategy and the design of the development were determined for the site. An analysis of the site's context included aspects of the landscape such as topography, hydrology (the infiltration and groundwater level tests), views, habitats and species, locally characteristic materials, form, and heights.

- As well as technical reports, the landscape-led approach to design is also represented in this application through a record of the understanding of the context and character of the area and those positive characteristics which define local distinctiveness. The overall principle of a terrace of houses addressing a new lane is supported. This is based on a local precedent (River Lane) that positively contributes to local distinctiveness. This is considered as the right approach. Having to review the previous feedback from the Design Officer, the layout of the new development is balanced well without detracting from local character.

- The use of the existing access from North Street has been previously supported, and thus retained. The previous comments with regards to the re-surfacing of the existing poor surface at the access are addressed. It is re-surfaced with locally characteristic and traditional materials for improving the character, as well as improving accessibility for future users. The introduction of a new public right of way through the site connecting North Street and River Lane to the east has been previously supported, and thus retained. The link/path through the existing bank on the eastern end which abuts River Lane has been previously supported and, thus retained as a permissible path, with minimal impact on the landscape. Steps down to River Lane are proposed to be built of contextually sensitive materials and the overall development of this area remains undisrupted for a better transition to the riverside. Whilst the site is 'permeable' for pedestrians, vehicles do not travel through the whole site. It is recommended that this access is available only for exceptional occasions (emergencies, deliveries, etc.), although without bollards or barriers will not be used to stop undesired traffic through or parking. The proposed lane through the site is narrowed down to the required minimum standards and set away from the southern boundary as far as possible - all in accordance with the 'Road in the South Downs' guidance as well as River Lane was used as a useful precedent. By doing this, some better quality trees category B trees were retained along the southern boundary. Parking, access and turning areas and required vehicle tracking and distances are met as described previously.

- The Design Officer has been supportive of the contemporary architectural approach to the proposed buildings and has considered that a contemporary approach may be more suited for construction techniques which maximise energy efficiency principles. This criterion is met. As described previously, the architecture is rooted in its context and positively contributes to the Conservation Area and Alfriston. The overall scale and mass of the buildings shown have been considered adequate, thus the proposal draws on the previously accepted traditional gables and hipped roofs. The ridge line has been reviewed and addressed, the proposed is broken up to avoid a long monotonous roof and includes chimneys. The elevations exposed to the public realm are active and offer natural surveillance.

- The private amenity space proposed complies with the minimum dimensions for north-facing gardens as per the Design Guide SPD (at least 12m deep and at least 60% of the internal floor space of the house.

- Houses meet and exceed Nationally Described Space Standards by 10%, as per the Design Guide SPD

- Storage is considered and designed at this stage; Cycle/bin storage is bespoke and is designed as an integral part of the architecture.

- The materials, including surface materials, are inspired by local precedents. This excludes any concrete pavers or other suburban solutions in this historic location. Any flint used is expected to be traditionally laid and not as pre-fabricated blocks.

- The Maisonettes typology is discounted and not included in this scheme due to its character and energy efficiency reasons.

- The proposal falls within the description of 'small residential development' (Sustainable Construction SPD), therefore the sustainability goals are considered at the application stage, as described previously.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the criteria of the SDNPA guidelines.

3. SUMMARY

The applicant seeks permission for 5 new dwellings with 2 semi-detached single-storey garage blocks and associated external works. This proposal has considered and responded to its location, the local vernacular and local planning policies, and will provide and add to the required high-quality architecture within this area.

Through a rigorous design process, the proposal aims to provide an accessible, adaptive, sustainable and good-quality residential accommodation with dedicated private amenities as well as semi-private and public domain. The proposed elevations comprise high-quality and sympathetic design and simple, traditional external material palette and finishes in keeping with the historical context of the Conservation Area.

The design, scale and materials of the development are not considered to result in a detrimental impact on the character of the area and would not conflict with the purposes of the South Downs National Park and its special qualities. The application is not considered to have a significantly great impact on the landscape, historical and built environment, as well as addresses all the comments received from the Conservation Officer and the Design Officer as part of the pre-application feedback, fully responds to the pre-application feedback received from the Case Officer at South Downs National Park and offers a chance to sensibly fulfil the potential of the site offered as part of allocation under Site Allocation Policy SD58 whilst being sensitive to the immediate environment, therefore, the application is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.



Fig. 16
Artist's impression - aerial view (nts)



Fig. 17
Artist's impression -street view (nts)

APPENDIX A - contextual external material study as part of early feasibility stage